



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

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EXCESS TILLAGE MAY COST PRODUCERS

DES MOINES – Producers who want to watch their energy costs should watch their tillage practices according to the DNR.

“The high costs of petroleum products can hit producers in the pocketbook for commercial fertilizers and for each trip across the field,” said Lyle Asell, special assistant for agriculture for the DNR.

Asell emphasized that all Iowans lose when crop producers choose excess tillage.

“Unnecessary tillage, especially fall tillage, can reduce crop residue and expose soils to winter rainfall and weather,” he said. “Exposed soil is more vulnerable to wind and water erosion, which can taint our streams and lakes with sediment, Iowa’s largest water pollutant.”

He added that producers should consider their crop rotation, tillage equipment, eligibility for programs and benefits to the environment when they make a decision about fall tillage.

“There may be some parts of the field that it just doesn’t make good sense to farm in a year with high energy costs – areas that normally pool water or have poor soils,” said Asell.

In some watershed areas, fall tillage or anhydrous fertilizer application could also cost producers payment dollars when they lose their eligibility for the USDA’s Conservation Security Program. This program rewards producers for conservation work.

Reduced tillage or no-till may be an answer for producers who have the right equipment, said Asell. Research from Iowa State University consistently shows that no-tilled soybeans into corn stalks offers equivalent yields to tilled alternatives, he added.

Producers with questions about the Conservation Security Program should contact their local Natural Resources Conservation Service office.

More information about yields can be found in the Iowa State University Extension publication “Considerations in Selecting No-Till,” PM1901-d, available on the web at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1901D.pdf>.

For more information, contact Bill Ehm, DNR nonpoint source watershed coordinator, at (515) 281-4701

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DNR WINS NATIONAL AND STATE AWARDS FOR COMPOST REBATE PROGRAM

DES MOINES – The composting business in Iowa has become a \$19 million per year industry, and it is continuing to grow. The DNR’s involvement with the industry resulted in top honors for its Compost Rebate Program from the National Recycling Coalition and the Iowa Recycling Association.

The DNR’s Compost Rebate Program, held in 2003 and 2004, encouraged first-time buyers to use compost for a rebate of up to \$5 or 50 percent off per cubic yard, whichever was less. Through the program, 92 first-time compost buyers purchased more than 17,500 cubic yards of compost, generating more than \$49,000 in refunds. The refunds were paid using landfill tipping fee revenues.

“The DNR’s program connected recycling and solid waste management with water quality issues by demonstrating how compost can be used for erosion and sediment control,” said Jeff Geerts, compost program manager. “The program also strengthened the competitive advantages of Iowa’s agricultural and food processing sectors by developing additional value-added markets for compost made with by-products from those sectors.”

The program was awarded the Outstanding Market Development Award in August from the National Recycling Coalition and the Recycling Project of the Year Award in October from the Iowa Recycling Association.

“We are honored to receive both of these awards,” said Geerts. “The rebate program is a great example of state and local government working together with the private sector. The involvement of the program’s partners from design to implementation was key to its success.”

Composting facilities participating in the Compost Rebate Program included the following:

- Cedar Rapids/Linn County Solid Waste Agency – Cedar Rapids

- Chamness Technology, Inc. – Eddyville
- Davenport Compost Facility – Davenport
- De Witt, City of – De Witt
- EnviroOne, LLC – Dubuque
- Iowa City Landfill – Iowa City
- Metro Waste Authority – Des Moines

For more information, contact Jeff Geerts at (515) 281-8176 or Jeff.Geerts@dnr.state.ia.us or visit www.iowadnr.com/waste/recycling/organics/index.html.

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NEW FORMS, PROCESS FOR ANIMAL FEEDING CONSTRUCTION PERMIT APPLICATIONS

DES MOINES – The DNR has revised three forms for animal feeding operations planning to build, modify or expand their facilities.

A new version of the construction permit application, the construction design statement and the professional engineer's certification were available last week on the DNR Web site.

“The new forms are clearer and easier to complete, so hopefully, producers will be able to complete them properly and minimize rejection,” said Wayne Farrand, wastewater supervisor.

Farrand added that starting Nov. 15, the DNR will no longer accept the old versions. “If a producer uses an older version, we will send them a new form,” said Farrand. “It's important for producers to realize that the starting date to process the permit will not occur until the new form is turned in.”

Improvements in the forms were requested during a process improvement event when the DNR asked for suggestions on how to decrease processing time without compromising environmental standards. Since many forms were coming in incomplete, participants suggested revising the forms to make them clearer and adding detailed checklists.

“This has been a record year for construction permit applications, so we need to manage staff resources as efficiently as possible,” said Farrand.

The DNR has approved 185 applications so far this year, compared with a total of 86 approved in 2004.

The forms are available on the DNR Web site, www.iowadnr.com, under animal feeding operations.

For more information, contact Wayne Farrand, at 515-281-8877.